



## **MONTANA STATE HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **VISITATION WITH PERSONAL PETS**

**Effective Date:** July 30, 2015

**Policy #:** TX-21

**Page 1 of 2**

- I. PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines when patients request to have personal visits from people bringing personal pets to the Montana State Hospital (MSH) campus.
- II. POLICY:**
  - A. The Hospital recognizes that visits from family members, friends, and personal pets can provide a positive therapeutic experience and promote recovery. Consequently, MSH allows approved visitors to bring in personal pets but maintains the following guidelines in order to promote health, safety, and a positive experience.
  - B. This policy does not apply to Animal Assisted Therapy (see MSH policy #TX-33, Animal Assisted Therapy) at MSH or the use of service animals to assist people with disabilities.
- III. DEFINITIONS:**
  - A. Pets: Domesticated dogs or cats.
- IV. RESPONSIBILITIES:**
  - A. Treatment Teams: To approve and develop guidelines for visitors and patients who request a visit with a personal pet while at MSH.
- V. PROCEDURE:**
  - A. Authorized visitors may request, in advance, permission to bring a personal pet to MSH for a visit with the person they are authorized to visit. The request will be considered by the patient's treatment team, focusing on the patient's level of recovery as well as other safety and infection control matters.
  - B. If the treatment team approves the visit with a personal pet, the Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) will write an order authorizing the visit with the pet, specifying rules, conditions, and restrictions on the visit. Orders do not have to be renewed for each specific visit, but may be renewed on an ongoing basis in the monthly orders.
  - C. Visits with personal pets will take place outdoors whenever possible. When it is important that the visit take place indoors, the designated locations where visits may occur are: 1) the alcove near the front door of the main hospital building; 2) the

## Montana State Hospital Policy and Procedure

### VISITION WITH PERSONAL PETS

Page 2 of 2

visiting room off of D wing if the patient is on that unit; 3) the fenced unit courtyards with outside entry; 4) room P119 and P150 at the Recovery Center, and 5) any room in the Therapeutic Learning Center where food is not prepared or served. This is intended to minimize exposure of other patients or staff who may be allergic to animals. Visits involving animals may not take place in locations where food is prepared or served.

- D. Treatment team members must inform front desk personnel of the arrangements of visits involving pets and provide a written description of the conditions and restrictions on the visit.
- E. Pets must remain under the immediate control of the visitor or patient during the visit. Pets are not permitted to run loose on the hospital campus at any time. Pets that behave poorly or do not appear to be clean and well cared for will not be allowed to return. Visits may be terminated if problems occur.
- F. Indications of allergic reactions in patients or staff must be reported to the hospital's infection preventionist.
- G. Staff must respect the wishes of patients and/or staff who do not want to come into contact with the animals or who may be fearful of the animals.

**VI. REFERENCES:** None

**VII. COLLABORATED WITH:** Director of Clinical Services, Rehabilitation Department Manager, Medical Director, Social Work Program Manager, Safety Officer.

**VIII. RESCISSIONS:** #TX-21, *Animal Visitation Policy* dated March 15, 2010; #TX-21, *Animal Visitation Policy* dated March 30, 2007; TX-21, *Animal Visitation Policy* dated August 30, 2006.

**IX. DISTRIBUTION:** All hospital policy manuals

**X. ANNUAL REVIEW AND AUTHORIZATION:** This policy is subject to annual review and authorization for use by either the Administrator or the Medical Director with written documentation of the review per ARM § 37-106-330.

**XI. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** Director of Clinical Services

**XII. ATTACHMENTS:** None

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John W. Glueckert                      Date  
Hospital Administrator

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Thomas Gray, M.D.                      Date  
Medical Director